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ABSTRACT

This digest focuses on the evolution of beginning teacher induction programs over the past two decades, and discusses the reasons why such programs are essential to the professional development of teachers. An overview is presented of existing induction programs, and observed outcomes of these programs are briefly discussed. In considering what needs to be done in the future, it is pointed out that thus far there has been little research on common program concerns, such as assessment, evaluation, specification of induction contents, and the definition of program objectives. A bibliography is included. (JD)

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CLEARINGHOUSE ON TEACHER EDUCATION

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Current Developments in Teacher Induction Programs

The evolution of induction programs began twenty years ago as schools began to explore schemes to assist the beginning teacher into the teaching profession. The literature cites studies of beginning teachers' problems in every area of teaching from instructional techniques to classroom management. Veenman's (1984) literature survey focuses on the problems as perceived by beginning teachers and the behavioral changes which teachers undergo as they react to those perceptions. His characterizations of beginning teachers originate from the education literature in Great Britian, Australia, and the United States. He provides extensive international references which describe attempts to assist beginning teachers through induction programs containing common objectives and procedures.

Authors debate ways to smooth out the induction of new teachers into school systems: extend preservice to five years, introduce internships, and establish induction programs for the first one to three years of teaching are three most often mentioned. Since 1980, many state legislatures have mandated induction programs such as "Entry Year Assistance Program," "Beginning Teacher Helping Program," "Assistance/Assessment," and "Teacher Mentor Program." A few states have gone so far as to specify program content and to design the

delivery system. Most programs have been established so recently that effectiveness studies are not yet available.

Why Are Induction Programs Needed?

A few years ago education professionals referred to the first three years of teaching as "induction." BITING THE APPLE by Kevin Ryan and six others, is one book among many depicting the plight of beginning teachers left to flounder in isolation as they attempt to deal with their first year of full teaching responsibilities. Today, "induction" implies a planned, organized orientation procedure.

Formal induction programs provide continuity between the closely supervised preservice experience and the assumption of full classroom responsibilities (Hall 1982; Griffin 1985). Inexperience accounts for most of a new teacher's problems. Student teachers have not survived a series of instructional failures, experienced class boredom (or their own), discovered a wall of class learning resistance, or felt the isolated entrapment of teaching "forever." Student teachers do not typically experience the nonteaching demands of meetings, paperwork, supervision of extracurricular activities, and student/parent conferences. McDonald et al. (1980-83) assert that a new teacher worries about being "in charge" of a class, losing control of the class, over- and underestimating students, and evaluation.

From the school administration's viewpoint, induction programs socialize the beginning teacher (Schlechty 1985; Galvez-Hjornevik 1985). Schlechty (1985) defines induction as the implantation of school standards and norms so deeply within the teacher that the teacher's conduct completely and spontaneously reflects those norms. School administrators are also intent upon recruiting and retaining high quality teachers. Thus the induction period is used to assess new recruits' strengths and weaknesses and to bring their performances up to school standards.

The teaching profession regards induction as the first step in staff development, as a link between student teacher and professional and as the cable of communication between state agencies and school districts, between public policy makers and teachers' organizations (Hall 1982). Huling-Austin (1985) succinctly states the highest goal obtainable by most induction programs: "to provide the support and assistance necessary for the successful development of beginning teachers who enter the profession with the background, ability, and personal characteristics to become acceptable teachers."

What Programs Exist?

In 1979, Educational Testing Service funded a survey of the history and evolution of induction programs (McDonald et al. 1980-83).

Many types of teacher orientation programs are listed in this report along with reasons for their establishment. Galvez-Hjornevik (1985) lists eleven programs for beginning teachers established between 1968 and 1978. Andrew (1981) describes a New Hampshire induction program unique in that it does not collaborate with institutions of higher education yet provides a teacher's sole route to recertification. Moreover, it is neither federally nor state funded. Defino and Hoffman (1984) document special purpose induction programs (eg. for rural teachers) in Hawaii, Idaho, Missouri, Vermont, West Virginia, Washington and Alaska. Varah et al. (1986) provides an extensive survey of teacher induction literature and reports on one of the longest running induction programs, the Teacher Induction Experience, implemented in 1974 by University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Since 1980 the state legislatures of Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Arizona, Oregon, and North Carolina have mandated the establishment of programs for beginning teachers. Defino and Hoffman (1984) describe these and other current projects in Nevada, New Mexico and Pennsylvania. Galvez-Hjornevik (1985) and others have recorded a wide variety of new programs. Among the more frequently examined in the literature are the California Mentor Teacher Program (California Department of Education 1983), the Oklahoma Entry Year Assistance Program (Elsner 1985), the multiple induction programs studied by researchers from the Research and Development Center for Teacher

Education (R&DCTE) at the Universtiy of Texas in Austin (Griffin 1985; Huling-Austin 1985) and the Career Development Program of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina (Schlechty 1985). So many induction programs are presently being developed that the November, 1985 issue of EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP and the January-February 1986 issue of JOURNAL OF TEACHER EDUCATION are devoted to induction issues. Additionally, the Association of Teacher Educators' Commission on the Induction Process in conjunction with the R&DCTE has produced a national directory of induction programs.

What Induction Program Outcomes Have Been Observed?

Other than the subjective feedback of induction program participant surveys, there have been few studies published containing "hard data" (Griffin 1985). Professionals saw induction programs as a way to mature teachers faster, to retain teachers by acquainting them with the system, and to avoid the type of frustration which invites good teachers to give up teaching. Such objectives take time to realize and more time for which to develop measuring devices (Elsner 1984).

Reports of studies conducted by R&DCTE of induction programs have recently been released. Griffin (1985) cites some observations that induction program developers would do well to note. Current induction

programs have shown great potential to alter the behavior of beginning teachers. Inductees, as new employees in any profession, have shown a willingness to adjust to their new surroundings even when the behavior runs contrary to theory and practice taught in teacher preparation programs.

What Needs to be Done?

The abundance of different types of induction programs has increased the demand for a comparative examination of programs. Griffin (1985) observes the need to explore the influence of legislated demands on program content and delivery systems. He suggests that mandated program objectives should be examined to measure their consistency with actual implementation of induction programs. Huling-Austin cautions that mandated induction programs often limit their scope of effectiveness to the minimum standards as legislated. This tendency argues further for careful examination of program intent, content, and consequent results.

The most apparent product of the massive implementation of induction programs, thus far, has been the overwhelming demand for research on common program concerns: assessment, evaluation, specification of induction contents, and the definition of program objectives.

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